

More Than Just a Road

Issues Affecting America's Favorite Drive

The Blue Ridge Parkway isn't difficult to locate on a map of Virginia or North Carolina. It is that long, blue or green line on the left side beginning at Shenandoah NP and meandering down the mountains to the Great Smoky Mountains NP. From this perspective, it looks relatively simple. On the ground, however, and especially as park managers grapple with issues of protection and conservation, the complexities become all too apparent.

Four issues have been identified as vital to the long term health and protection of this special place.

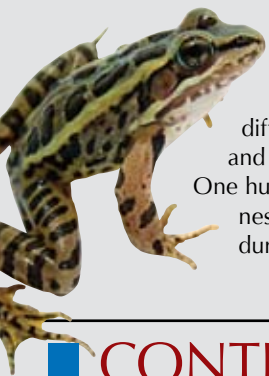
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Blue Ridge Parkway is world renowned for its diversity - a place of varied and significant natural resources and offering an exceptional glimpse into regional flora and fauna.

Within park boundaries are about 600 streams (150 headwaters), 53 Natural Heritage Areas (areas set aside as national, regional, or state examples of exemplary natural communities), and possibly 100 different soil types.

The Parkway's tremendous diversity is also due to its elevation range of 5,700 feet and its large north-south geographic range. Diverse geology, a variety of micro-habitats, and varying climates also affect biological diversity.

Many species of animals also make their homes along the Parkway. Seventy four different mammals, more than 40 amphibians, and 35 reptiles can be found on Parkway lands. One hundred fifteen species of birds are known to nest here with dozens of others passing through during fall and spring migrations.



CONTROLLING NON-NATIVE SPECIES

The Parkway faces issues of many non-native species that threaten native vegetation. The problem is magnified by the length and shape of the park. Once established in a new area, the non-native species can spread with devastating results. Some exotics even thrive in their new habitat since the competition of natural enemies that once kept them in check are now absent. Without controls, adaptation to the new region can lead to unmanageable levels.

ELIMINATING PLANT POACHING



Because of its biological diversity, the Parkway has become the focus of a growing problem with the illegal harvesting of plants (or "poaching") that support a \$200 billion global natural products industry.

Traditional use of many plants in the forest is part of the culture of the mountains, dating back to Native American populations before European settlement. In the past, families gathered plants for personal consumption, as traditional herbal folk remedies, or as a cash crop. Harvesting of plants today, however, often involves organized violators who are employed as part of criminal conspiracies to supply legal markets with medicinal plants.

Poaching of plants has a direct impact on biological communities, the potential for research, and on the visitors' enjoyment. In the wild, plants often grow in isolated patches that can be easily devastated by poachers. When a population is reduced to only a few individual plants or colonies, the genetic diversity is reduced.

Although limited quantities of berries, fruits, and nuts can be gathered for personal consumption on park lands, the role of the National Park Service is to protect the natural and historic objects of the park so that they will be available for the enjoyment of future generations.

Non-native animals can also pose problems to the native species of the southern mountains. Eastern bluebird populations dropped significantly as the more aggressive European starlings took over available nesting cavities. Introduced brown and rainbow trout have displaced the native brook trout from many streams, forcing the native trout to move further and further upstream.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is set aside, as are all national park areas, to conserve scenery, wildlife, and the natural and historic objects within the park. One of the most serious threats to preservation of the natural resources is the invasion of these non-native or exotic species.



■ PROTECTING PARKWAY VIEWSHEDS

Along the Parkway, the boundary remains close at hand, and the long, sweeping views that we enjoy from the ridge tops extend all the way to the horizon.

This idea, the horizon as the boundary, also creates unique challenges today for those who manage the Parkway, since the park was designed to take full advantage of these scenic views. Decisions made outside the park boundary in the communities along the way affect the visitors' experience. In a similar way, every decision made by Parkway management is done with the understanding that this can affect the neighboring communities. Through the 29 North Carolina and Virginia counties that the Parkway travels, a half million acres of scenic views lie within a two mile wide corridor.

During construction, local residents referred to the overlooks as "balconies" and the Parkway remains today as something of a platform or a balcony for many visitors. People enjoy climbing up high and looking out into valleys and across distant mountain ranges, and into rural landscapes and local communities.

This notion of the horizon as the park boundary created a sense of wilderness in the designers' minds. In essence, they felt that it provided "freedom from the impression of a boundary line."

The Linn Cove Viaduct "Hugging" the Grandfather for Twenty Five Years

As difficult as the design and engineering of the Blue Ridge Parkway may have seemed in the early days of the 1930s, few of those who envisioned this marvelous road would have dreamed of the difficulties encountered in the final construction.

A seven mile unfinished section was delayed for years as environmentalists, adjacent landowners, engineers, and architects put their skills together. The challenge... to preserve the scenic and fragile environment of Grandfather Mountain. The answer... the Linn Cove Viaduct, a structure that brings beauty and utility in harmony with habitat protection.

This last section of the Parkway was opened in September 1987, and for twenty five years, visitors have been able to "hug" Grandfather's fragile slope, getting a close up appreciation for the relationship between the building of the Linn Cove Viaduct and the unique Parkway design that preserves the fragile habitat.

A traditional cut-and-fill road construction technique was not acceptable, so engineers came up with the unique design that would skirt the rugged and rocky slopes of Grandfather. The 1243 foot long bridge consists of 153 segments, each with a unique shape and each weighing 50 tons. Each segment was precast at another

location, transported to the bridge site, and lowered into place from above to minimize disturbance of the environment. Since its completion in 1987, the Linn Cove Viaduct has received eleven design awards.

Generations of North Carolina residents living in the Piedmont and in the mountains have enjoyed looking for the long-bearded profile – the Grandfather - silhouetted against the sky. Since the eighteenth century, botanists and scientists have come here in search of the rare species and unusual habit on this mountain. Is it any wonder that the special features of the ecology of Grandfather also came into play as the last section of the Parkway was designed around its slopes?



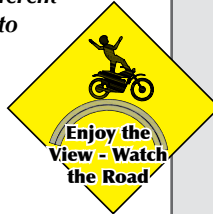


While most visitors travel the Parkway in an automobile, ever increasing numbers visit the park on two-wheels, via bicycle or motorcycle. Remember, spectacular views are best enjoyed at one of the Parkway's many overlooks.

Be aware of rapidly changing road character and environmental conditions, particularly when the roadway curves and descends at the same time. Please enjoy the views, but watch the curves.

GENERAL DRIVING SAFETY

Because of its unique design, the Parkway drive is different than most and this can mean taking some extra care to ensure a safe visit. "Enjoy the view, but watch the road!" is our way of reminding visitors to pay extra attention along the Parkway. A few specific pointers and facts may help even more.



WATCH OUT FOR...

STEEP GRADES – In some places, the Parkway has steeper grades than normally found on highways. Without paying close attention, your speed can increase far more than you expect.

UNFORGIVING ROAD SHOULDERS – The Parkway's road shoulders are narrow in places so that the meadows or forest edges grow close to the pavement. This is, of course, part of the beauty of the drive, but may require some extra attention.

BUILT-IN DISTRACTIONS – Wildlife, wildflowers, bicyclists, and extraordinary views... all of these contribute to the Parkway experience and every traveler should be aware of these while enjoying the drive.

LIMITED SIGHT DISTANCES – There aren't many straight lines in the natural world and the Parkway was designed with gentle curves and not many straight sections. This is part of what makes the road seem to lie gently on the land and it also requires some extra attention while driving.

SPEED CHANGES – The Parkway speed limit is mostly 45 mph, but occasionally you will find yourself in developed areas where the driving speed drops to 25 mph.

SPIRAL CURVES – Some of the tight curves do not have a consistent radius so extra care needs to be taken, especially on motorcycles.

OTHER IMPORTANT SAFETY ADVICE

■ Hiking shoes or boots are recommended for most trails, especially the more strenuous ones. Steep and rocky areas and slippery stream crossings require extra attention and careful footing. Even for trails marked "easy," it is advisable to wear flat or rubber-soled shoes for comfort and good traction. Wearing sandals, "flip-flops," or high heels can result in accidents.

■ Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.

■ Sudden changes in weather are common in these mountains. Even in mild seasons, rapid dips in temperature and unexpected thunderstorms frequently occur, and at higher elevations the wind and temperature can carry a surprising chill. Be prepared for weather changes by bringing along suitable clothing.

■ Do not drink the water from streams or springs.

LODGING & DINING

Lodges are located on the Parkway at

Peaks of Otter
(MP 86), **Doughton Park** (MP 241.1), and
Mt. Pisgah (MP 408),
with cabins available at
Rocky Knob (MP 175).



Pisgah Inn • Treetops

Restaurants, other facilities and services

are available at a number of other locations, opening in mid- or late April.

See chart on page 7 for details.

Check nps.gov/blri for availability of food and lodging during the 2012 season.

SPECIAL INFORMATION: MILEPOSTS:

Along the Parkway, you will see numbered mileposts. The zero milepost marker is at Rockfish Gap immediately south of Shenandoah National Park. Each mile is numbered progressively southward on the Parkway to its southernmost entrance at Cherokee.



OUR SYMBOL

The National Park Service arrowhead was authorized as the agency's official emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. Created in 1949 by Aubrey V. Neasham, a Park Service historian, the insignia was intended to represent several aspects of the mission of the National Park Service: Its shape and earth-brown background embody our nation's cultural heritage exemplified in the parks by archaeology and history. The bison and the sequoia tree (symbols from the first two national parks--Yellowstone and Sequoia) represent the diverse natural world of plants and animals included within the system. The snowcapped mountain and glacier portrayed on the insignia's horizon and the white of the water in its right foreground signify the all-important values of scenery and recreation. The symbol first appeared on a park road sign, then a ranger uniform in September 1952. The icon was registered as an official emblem of the Park Service on February 9, 1965, by the United States Patent Office.





PLACES TO PAUSE ALONG THE PARKWAY...

REGULATIONS BY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

To help protect and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway, yourself, and others, observe all park regulations. Be alert for uncontrolled fire, safety hazards, accidents and emergencies. Please report such conditions by calling **1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928)**.

ROADSIDE PARKING - Parking is allowed on road shoulders, but please avoid wet areas and make sure that all four wheels are off the pavement.

TRAILS - Trails are for hiking only. Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not permitted.

CAMPING - Camping is permitted only in park campgrounds or designated back-country sites. See Camping information, page 8.

PETS - All pets must be on a leash or under physical restraint at all times while in the park. The territorial instinct of dogs can lead to fights with other dogs on the trail. Dogs also frighten hikers and chase wildlife. If a pet cannot be kept under control, it should be left at home.

LAKES AND PONDS - These are for fishing and scenic beauty only, with no swimming allowed. Nearby U.S. Forest Service recreation areas, state parks, and mountain resorts often have swimming facilities.

PREVENT FOREST FIRES - Fires are permitted in the provided grills or fire pits in campgrounds and picnic areas only.

BOATS - Only on Price Lake, boats without motors or sails are permitted.

LITTER - Deposit all litter in the trash cans provided.

ALL NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PROTECTED - Leave wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural condition for others to enjoy. Do not disturb animal or plant life in any way. Hunting and trapping are prohibited. Do not interfere with animals by feeding, touching, or frightening them. Do not cut, deface, or damage trees.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES - Possession of open containers of alcohol in vehicles is prohibited. Alcohol is permitted in campgrounds by registered campers and in picnic areas until 9:00 PM.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Most Parkway facilities are wheelchair usable. Some facilities have minor slope and/or structural barriers. For more information about access, please contact The Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters, 199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville, NC 28803. Phone: **(828) 271-4779**.

Check nps.gov/blri for availability of food and lodging during the 2012 season.

	Milepost	Visitor Center	Camping	Exhibits	Programs	Restrooms	Picnic Areas
Humpback Rocks	5.8	H		H	HP	H	X
Otter Creek**	60.9		H		H	HP	
James River	63.8	HP		H		HP	X
Peaks of Otter*	86	H	H	H	H	H	HP
Explore Park VC	115	H		H		H	
Roanoke Mountain	120.4		H		H	HP	
Smart View	154.5					HP	H
Rocky Knob^	169	H	H		HP	HP	H
Mabry Mill **	176.1			HP	HP	HP	
Groundhog Mountain	189					HP	H
Blue Ridge Music Cntr	213	H		H	H	H	
Cumberland Knob	217.5					H	H
Doughton Park*	241.1		H	HP	HP	HP	HP
NW Trading Post	258.6					H	
Jeffress Park	272					HP	H
Cone Park	294.1	H		H	H	H	
Price Park	297.1		H		H	HP	H
Linn Cove Viaduct	304.4	H		H		H	
Linville Falls	316.4	H	H	H	X	H	H
Minerals Museum	331	H		H	H	H	
Crabtree Falls **	339.5		H		HP	H	H
Craggy Gardens	364.6	H		H		HPA	H
Folk Art Center	382	H		H	H	H	H
Parkway Visitor Ctr.	384	H		H	H	H	H
Mt Pisgah*	408.6		H		HP	H	HP
Waterrock Knob	451.2	H		H	H	H	

H – Wheelchair Accessible. HP – Accessible with Assistance. X – Not Handicapped Accessible. HPA – Located in Picnic Area. *- Lodging and Dining Available. ** Dining Available. ^ Lodging Available.



CAMPING

Of the Parkway's nine campgrounds, most have at least some sites that will accommodate sizeable recreational vehicles, and all offer restrooms, drinking water, picnic tables and grills. The settings are tranquil and scenic, and most offer ready access to miles of hiking trails for those who want to explore on foot. ***Be sure to ask about Ranger talks and campfire programs that are given most weekends and occasionally during the week.*** Most campgrounds are at elevations of more than 2,500 feet, which means that temperatures are usually cooler than in the surrounding area. Even in summer a sweater can come in handy.

Campgrounds are open early May through October, with a per night charge of \$16. Reservations may be made for some sites at the **Peaks of Otter, Rocky Knob, Price Park, Linville Falls** and **Mt. Pisgah** campgrounds. Shower facilities are only available at Mt. Pisgah campground. All other campgrounds and sites are "first come, first served." To make a reservation, visit www.recreation.gov on the Internet or call toll-free (877) 444-6777. Reserved sites are \$19 per night. As a general rule, demand is higher on weekends and holidays.

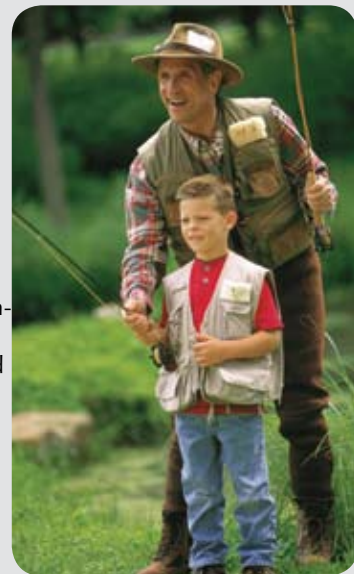
Group camping is available only at **Linville Falls Campground**. Call (828) 765-6082 for more information. In addition, limited backcountry camping is available via permit at **Basin Cove in Doughton Park** (336) 372-8568 and **Rock Castle Gorge** (540) 745-9661).

Camping outside of designated campgrounds or without a permit at backcountry sites is prohibited.



FISHING

The Parkway lies along the headwaters of many regional watersheds. Thirteen lakes were constructed for aesthetic beauty and recreational opportunities. Streams, ponds, and rivers give anglers ample opportunity to test their skills for trout, bass, and panfish. A state license from either North Carolina or Virginia is valid for fishing in all park waters. Creel limits and other regulations vary. Ask a ranger for details.



BICYCLING

In North Carolina, helmets are required for all bicyclists under sixteen years of age. In Virginia, the regulations vary by county. Helmets are a highly recommended safety item when bicycling the Blue Ridge Parkway. High visibility clothing is recommended. Be sure to ride single file, well to the right-hand side of the road and obey the same traffic rules that apply to motor vehicles. Bicycles are not permitted on trails or walkways. Plan ahead, and be sure to take into consideration elevation changes that will require more time and, of course, more exertion.

BE A GOOD GUEST IN BEAR COUNTRY!

Seeing bears can be the highlight of any visit to a national park. However, while visitors to the Parkway come and go, bears and other wildlife live here. Your actions can have a lasting impact on the behavior and health of these magnificent animals. Bears quickly lose their natural fear of people if fed human food, so do not feed them, crowd them or observe them too closely. Store all food, coolers, utensils or anything that may smell like food in locked vehicles. Place litter in garbage cans as soon as possible.

RESTROOMS

Restrooms are available at visitor centers, picnic areas and restaurants along the Parkway.

JUST FOR KIDS



YOUTH IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Department of the Interior's Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative helps achieve the vital goal of connecting young people with America's natural and cultural heritage. By educating, engaging, and employing youth, we will help tackle some of the many challenges facing young people today, from high unemployment rates to declining health. Reconnect with our natural and cultural heritage while building personal experiences that can be the foundation of careers in resource stewardship. It is fun and rewarding! Find more at americas-greatoutdoors.gov or youthgo.gov including links to the "Track Trails" program of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation.

RANGER LED PROGRAMS

Rangers and park volunteers share their knowledge of the Parkway by presenting a variety of interpretive programs from June through October. Campfire talks, guided hikes, historic craft demonstrations, music, and nature study are some of the activities you and your family can enjoy. Specific schedules are posted at all developed areas.

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAMS

A Junior Ranger is someone like you who cares for and learns about America's national parks so that others in the future may enjoy them. Ask for a handbook at any visitor center and begin your journey to becoming a Parkway Junior Ranger.

PARKS AS CLASSROOMS

Blue Ridge Parkway staff offers programs for students in their classrooms during the school year. The aim is to connect students with the natural world and the region's cultural heritage in ways that are real and meaningful, while meeting state curriculum standards. In the spring and fall, Rangers offer programs at many locations along the Parkway. Teachers should contact the closest Parkway office from the list provided in the "FOR TEACHERS" section of www.nps.gov/blri. The best hope for the future lies in educating today's children!

PARKWATCH: 1-800-PARKWATCH (727-5928)

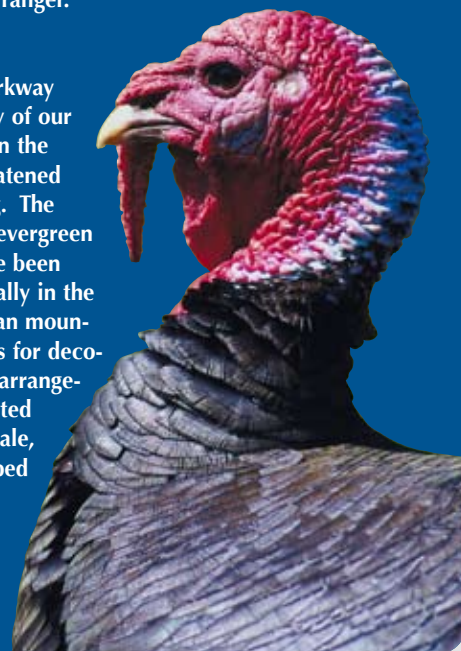
The Parkwatch program encourages visitors and park neighbors to actively protect and preserve this special place.

Please be alert and report any uncontrolled fires, emergencies, accidents, safety hazards, vandalism, or crime to a park employee. For general Parkway information, call (828) 298 0398.



"MAKING A DIFFERENCE" A RESPONSIBLE VISIT

- The best diet for all animals is a natural one. Human food can make any wild animal sick. The digestive system of a white tail deer, common around campgrounds and picnic areas, only breaks down the natural food sources including twigs, bark, leaves, grasses and acorns. Wild animals like the taste of human food, but for their safety and health, do not feed them.
- The Parkway has unique habitats that support rare and endangered plants and animals. Many of these plants are threatened by foot traffic. The problem can be alleviated by the simple practice of staying on the trail. There are several especially sensitive areas, including the Tanawha Trail around Grandfather Mountain, the Craggy Pinnacle Trail at Craggy Gardens, and at Devil's Courthouse. Whether you suspect the presence of rare plants or not, please stay on the trail – if for no other reason than to protect all plants and to prevent erosion.
- Rabies can be transmitted by most wild animals. Animals in the park should not be treated as pets or lured close enough to feed or touch. If a squirrel, chipmunk, or other animal comes close without your encouragement, it could be a sign of serious illness, please tell a ranger.
- All plants on the Parkway are protected. Many of our native wildflowers in the Blue Ridge are threatened by illegal harvesting. The large, round, shiny evergreen leaves of Galax have been gathered commercially in the southern Appalachian mountains for generations for decorative uses in floral arrangements. Now harvested on a much larger scale, they are being shipped to flower shops around the world.



NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS - PRESERVING COMMUNITY STORIES

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are lived-in landscapes, offering innovative methods for citizens, in partnership with government and non-profits, to shape the long-term future of their communities. NHAs are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. The National Park Service partners with, provides technical assistance, and distributes matching federal funds from Congress to NHA entities.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage is a partner in the operation of the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center at Milepost 304 and connects the stories and landscapes of 25 western North Carolina counties and the Cherokee's Qualla Boundary. The age-old traditions of music, crafts, food and mountain lore are yours to explore.

HOW DO NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS WORK?

National Heritage Areas (NHA) expand on traditional approaches to resource stewardship by supporting large-scale, community driven initiatives that connect local citizens to the preservation and planning process.

HOW DOES A REGION BECOME A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA?

Each National Heritage Area is designated by Congress and governed by separate authorizing legislation. For an area to be considered for designation, the landscape must have nationally distinctive natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that tell a unique story about our country.

HOW DO COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATION?

The designation has both tangible and intangible benefits grounded in a community's pride in its history and traditions. It offers a collaborative approach to conservation without compromising traditional local control over and use of the landscape.

WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES DOES A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA OFFER TO OUTSIDE VISITORS?

National Heritage Areas appeal to all ages and interests. Some have opportunities for walking, hiking, biking and paddling. Some have festivals to attend and museums to visit. Many Areas provide volunteer opportunities, group tours, and multiple-day excursions and can also be visited in combination with over 80 units of the National Park Service.

(For more information, visit nps.gov/history/heritageareas or blueridgeheritagearea.com)

OTHER COMMON FLOWERS

Birdfoot Violet - (*Viola pedata*) 4-10 inches tall, bluish-purple flower. March — June
Columbine - (*Aquilegia canadensis*) about 2 feet tall, nodding red and yellow flower. June — July
Sun Drops - (*Oenothera fruticosa*) 1-2 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
Evening Primrose - (*Oenothera biennis*) 3-5 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
Phlox - (*Phlox* species) 2-6 feet tall, magenta-pink flowers. July — October
Touch-me-not - (*Impatiens* species) 3-6 feet tall, nodding yellow or orange flower. July — August
Tall Bellflower - (*Campanula americana*) 2-6 feet tall, blue, 5-petal flower. July — August
White Snakeroot - (*Eupatorium rugosum*) 3-5 feet tall, bright white flower heads. July — Sept

Showy Blooms

A Quick Guide to some flowers & shrubs on the Parkway

Shrubs



Catawba Rhododendron

(*Rhododendron catawbiense*):
A medium shrub with pink to purple flowers growing above 3000 feet on exposed ridges.
June — Early July



Rosebay Rhododendron

(*Rhododendron maximum*):
also called White Rhododendron:
A large shrub with white to pink flowers, over a wide range of elevations. **June — July**



Flame Azalea

(*Rhododendron calendulaceum*):
A medium shrub with bright orange to red flowers. Azaleas are in the rhododendron family. **June — July**



Wild Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea arborescens*):
A medium shrub with large clusters of white flowers.
May — August



Mountain Laurel

(*Kalmia latifolia*):
A medium shrub with pink flowers.
June — July



Pinxter Flower

(*Rhododendron nudiflorum*):
A medium shrub with pink honeysuckle-like flowers, common at lower elevations.
April — May

Flowers



Fire Pink

(*Silene virginica*):
This 6-20 inch plant has bright red flowers up to 1-1/2 inches wide.
April — June



Goat's Beard

(*Aruncus dioicus*):
3-5 feet tall with flower plumes 3-5 inches wide and 6-10 inches long.
May — June



Bluets

(*Houstonia* species):
3-6 inches tall with many small 4-petal flowers, light to dark blue. Bluets sometimes grow in large beds.
May-August



Turks-Cap Lily

(*Lilium superbum*):
6 to 10 feet tall with flowers 2-4 inches wide with a green star at center. The Carolina Lily (*L. michauxii*) is similar but lacks the green star and bears fewer flowers. **July-August**



Large-Flowered Trillium

(*Trillium grandiflorum*):
The largest of several trilliums found along the parkway, grows to about 15 inches. Trilliums have 3 leaves and a single 3-petal flower. **April — May**



Bee Balm

(*Monarda didyma*), also called Oswego Tea:
2-5 feet tall with bright red 2-inch flowers. Wild Bergamot is similar but pink. **July — August**

For a complete list of blooms, log onto:
<http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/brochures.htm>

Dense Blazing Star - (*Liatris spicata*) 2-4 feet tall, rose-purple flowered spike. **August — Sept**
Goldenrod - (*Solidago* species) about 3 feet tall, golden-yellow spikes or plumes. **August — Sept**
Ox Eye Daisy - (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) 1-3 feet tall; white petals, yellow center.
Black-Eyed Susan - (*Rudbeckia hirta*) 3-6 feet tall, yellow petals, black center.
Tall Coneflower - (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) 2-3 feet tall, drooping yellow petals, green center.
Coreopsis - (*Coreopsis major*) 2-3 feet tall, golden-yellow petals, green center.
Jerusalem Artichoke - (*Helianthus tuberosus*) 5-10 feet tall, yellow petals, yellow center.
Aster - (*Aster* species) 2-5 feet tall; many small flowers; blue, purple, or white petals.

Mount Mitchell State Park, NC

Mount Mitchell is the highest point in eastern North America, rising to 6,684 feet. A Mount Mitchell State Park map with trail information is available at the state park headquarters, two miles up NC State Highway 128 from the park entrance at Milepost 355.4. Write to Mount Mitchell State Park, 2388 State Hwy 128, Burnsville, NC 28714 or call (828) 675 4611. www.ncparks.gov

Appalachian Trail, VA

The Appalachian Trail parallels the first 100 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway to a point just north of Roanoke VA. There are many trail access points along this section of the Parkway. For more information, please refer to Appalachian Trail publications. www.nps.gov/appa



Popular Hiking Trails of the Blue Ridge Parkway

Hiking maps are available at Visitor Center closest to the trail or can be downloaded at www.nps.gov/blri

Virginia Trails

Milepost	Trail - Miles - Difficulty
5.9	Farm Museum Trail 0.25 easy *
34.4	Yankee Horse (logging RR) 0.2 moderate
60.8	Otter Creek 3.5 moderate *
63.1	Otter Lake Loop 0.8 moderate *
63.6	James River (canal locks) 0.2 easy *
63.6	Trail of Trees Loop 0.5 moderate *
78.4	Apple Orchard Falls 1.2 strenuous **
83.1	Fallingwater Cascades 1.6 moderate **
83.5	Flat Top 4.4 strenuous *
85.7	Abbott Lake Loop 1.0 easy *
85.9	Elk Run Loop 0.8 easy *
85.9	Johnson Farm Loop 2.1 moderate *
85.9	Harkening Hill 3.3 moderate *
86.0	Sharp Top 1.6 strenuous *
110.6	Stewart Knob 1.2 moderate *
114.9	Roanoke River Loop 0.35 easy *
120.4	Roanoke Mountain Summit 0.11 moderate *
154.5	Smart View Loop 2.6 moderate
167.1	Rock Castle Gorge Loop 10.8 strenuous *
176.2	Mabry Mill 0.5 easy
213.0	Fisher's Peak Loop 2.25 moderate *

North Carolina Trails

Milepost	Trail - Miles - Difficulty
217.5	Cumberland Knob 0.5 easy *
230.1	Little Glade Millpond Loop 0.4 easy
241.0	Fodder Stack 1.0 moderate *
271.9	Cascades Loop 0.5 moderate
294.0	Flat Top Mountain 3.0 moderate *
294.1	Figure 8 Loop 0.7 easy *
296.5	Boone Fork Loop 5.5 moderate-strenuous *
297.0	Price Lake Loop 2.7 moderate *
304.4	Linn Cove Viaduct Access 0.16 easy *
305.2	Beacon Heights 0.2 moderate *
305.5	Tanawha (MP 297 - 305) 13.5 moderate-strenuous * D
316.4	Linville Falls, Erwins View 0.8 moderate *
316.4	Linville Falls, Plunge Basin 0.5 strenuous *
339.5	Crabtree Falls 2.5 strenuous *
364.2	Craggy Pinnacle 0.7 moderate *
407.6	Mt. Pisgah Summit 1.3 moderate-strenuous *
407.6	Buck Springs (lodge to view) 1.06 easy-moderate *
408.5	Frying Pan Mountain 1.06 moderate-strenuous *
418.8	Graveyard Fields Stream Loop 2.3 moderate
431.0	Richland Balsam 1.5 moderate
451.2	Waterrock Knob Summit 0.6 moderate-strenuous

Please note:
Distances are one way except for loop trails. See trail maps for distances, features, walking conditions and important advice. * Hiking map is available. ** Designated National Recreation Trail.
D=Tanawha has nine Parkway access points, several in the Grandfather Mountain area.



THE BLUE RIDGE AND ITS EVOLVING MUSICAL TRADITIONS

Migrating people have always carried their music with them and surely this can be said of our mountain ancestors. The people who populated the region created and continue to keep alive some of the richest traditions of music and dance in our nation.

Blue Ridge Parkway visitors have an exciting opportunity this summer to explore the origins and traditions of that music. "The Roots of American Music," - permanent, interactive exhibits at the Blue Ridge Music Center (Milepost 213) tell the compelling story of the region's rich musical heritage.

Children will have the opportunity to mix and match song lyrics, mix their own version of

mountain music, and hear personal stories of how music has influenced generations of Blue Ridge families. Visitors will see examples of the many stages of the evolution of the five string banjo since its arrival in America with enslaved Africans. The blending of banjo and fiddle in the culture of Tidewater plantations was the beginning of virtually all forms of American music and was the ensemble that came to frontier Appalachia. This is the story visitors will see and experience.

Inspired by the natural world around them, visitors can now better understand and appreciate the complexity and richness of this part of our regional culture.

North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail

The Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST), when complete, will extend over 930 miles from Clingman's Dome, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Jockey's Ridge on the North Carolina Outer Banks. Much of the MST parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway with many trail access points along the Parkway.

The Carolina Mountain Club maintains and builds trails from the Tanawha Trail to Stone Mountain (MP 305 - 236). To volunteer, contact:

Carolina Mountain Club
PO Box 10431
Raleigh, NC • 27605
www.ncmst.org